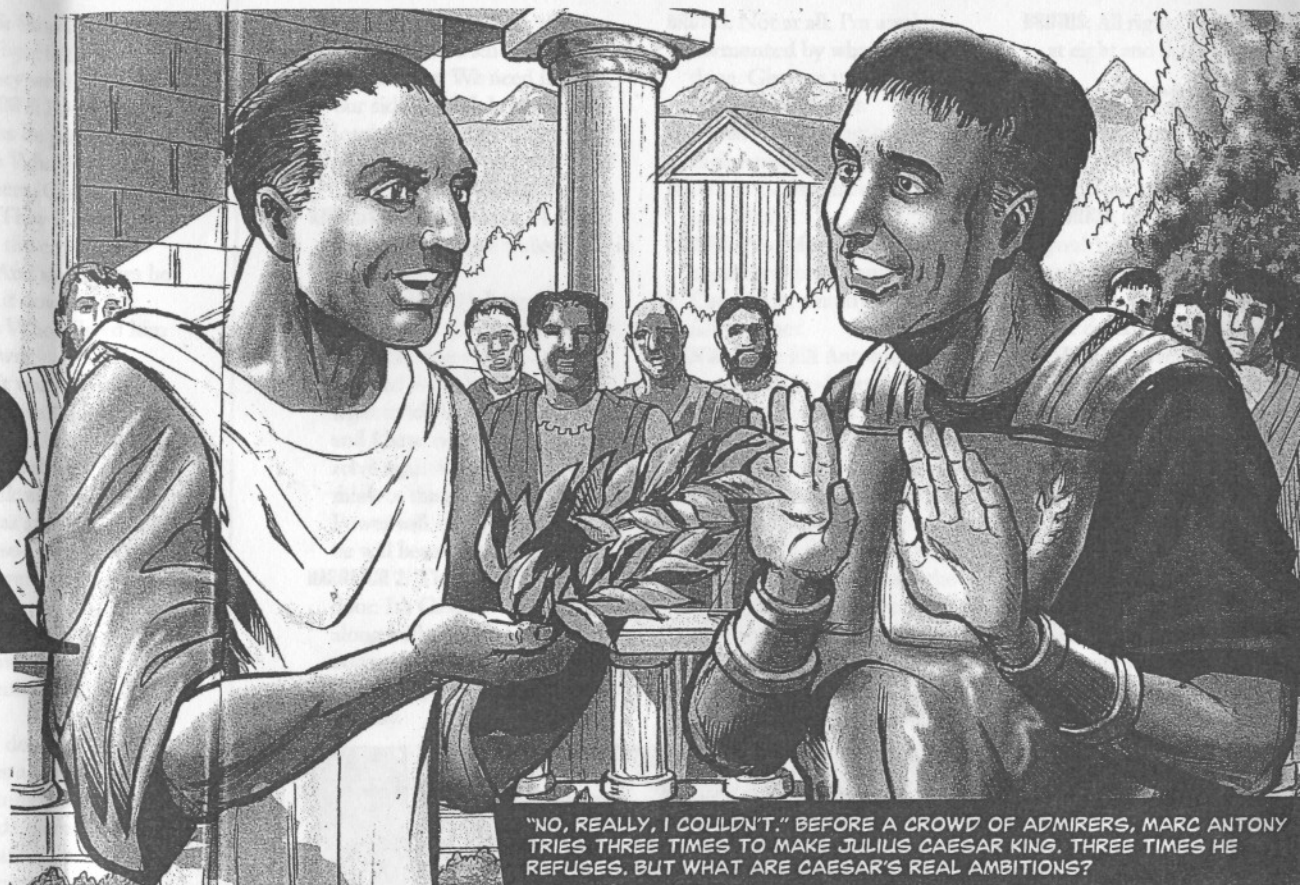


Julius Caesar

Has this popular general become too powerful? Some people think so, and they aim to stop him. Find out what happens in Shakespeare's gripping tale of jealousy, conspiracy, and murder.

ADAPTED FOR SCOPE BY CATE BAILY • ILLUSTRATIONS BY TERRY TIDWELL/MIRACLE STUDIOS



"NO, REALLY, I COULDN'T." BEFORE A CROWD OF ADMIRERS, MARC ANTONY TRIES THREE TIMES TO MAKE JULIUS CAESAR KING. THREE TIMES HE REFUSES. BUT WHAT ARE CAESAR'S REAL AMBITIONS?

CHARACTERS: Write your initials next to the character you're going to read.

- | | |
|---|--|
| — *Narrator 1 | — Calpurnia [Cal-PUR-nee-uh], <i>Caesar's wife</i> |
| — *Narrator 2 | — Flavius [FLAY-vee-us] |
| — *Julius Caesar [JOO-lee-us SEE-zer], <i>a Roman general</i> | — Marullus, [Mah-ROOL-us] } <i>representatives of the Roman citizens</i> |
| — *Marc Antony [Mark AN-tuh-nee], <i>Caesar's trusted advisor</i> | — Cobbler, <i>a shoemaker</i> |
| — Soothsayer, <i>a fortune-teller</i> | — Citizen 1 |
| — *Brutus [BROO-tuhss] | — Citizen 2 |
| — *Cassius [KA-shuhss] | — Caesar's Ghost, <i>the ghost of Julius Caesar</i> |
| — Casca [KAS-ka] } <i>the conspirators</i> | — Octavius Caesar, <i>Caesar's adopted son and heir</i> |
| — Decius [DEE-see-us] | |

*Starred characters are major roles.

GLOSSARY: rival – enemy, competitor • endure – bear, put up with • tyrant – a cruel ruler (when a tyrant rules: tyranny) • conspirators – people involved in a secret plan • tormented – feeling great pain • suspicious – distrustful • valiant – brave • ambitious – wishing power, success • distraught – upset, worried • traitor – person who betrays a cause or trust • avenge – take revenge for a loss

NOTE: BLUE text in the play indicates direct lines from Shakespeare's original version.

SCENE 1

NARRATOR 1: The year is 44 B.C. The city of Rome is at the center of a large, growing empire. At this time, Rome is a republic—a government run by elected representatives.

NARRATOR 2: In Rome, there lives a powerful general named Julius Caesar. As our play begins, Caesar is returning after a victory against a bitter rival.

NARRATOR 1: Banners wave. Crowds cheer. But not everyone loves the great leader. Some believe he's become too popular and too powerful.

FLAVIUS: Go home, people. This isn't a holiday.

MARULLUS: You, what is your profession? Why aren't you at work today?

COBBLER: I'm a cobbler, a mender of soles. I'm here to get people on their feet and get myself more business. And, of course, to celebrate Caesar's triumph.

MARULLUS: You don't know what you're cheering for.

FLAVIUS: Go home!

NARRATOR 2: The cobbler and the crowd are driven away. Flavius and Marullus tear down the banners.

SCENE 2

NARRATOR 1: But later there is no shortage of fans when Caesar arrives to address the public. With him are his trusted adviser, Marc Antony, and two other friends, Cassius and Brutus.

SAY IT! rival — RI-vuhl



"BEWARE THE IDES OF MARCH!" THAT'S MARCH 15 TO YOU AND ME. A SOOTHSAYER PREDICTS IT WILL BE CAESAR'S UNLUCKIEST DAY!

NARRATOR 2: Crowds cheer the mighty Caesar. But then, someone shouts a warning.

SOOTHSAYER: Caesar! Beware the ides of March!

NARRATOR 1: The "ides of March" means March 15.

CAESAR: What man is that?

BRUTUS: He is a soothsayer, a man who predicts the future.

CAESAR: Let me see his face.

CASSIUS: Sir, come through the crowd; look upon Caesar.

CAESAR: What did you say to me?

SOOTHSAYER: Beware the ides of March.

CAESAR (confidently): He is just a dreamer. Let's go.

NARRATOR 2: Caesar moves on to the next admiring crowd.

SCENE 3

NARRATOR 1: Brutus and Cassius stay behind and talk. They hear cheering and applause.

BRUTUS: What do you think that

noise is about? I bet the people are making Caesar their king.

CASSIUS: Do I sense you would be unhappy if Caesar were king?

BRUTUS: Well, he's my friend. But I don't think he should be king. Rome should be a republic, not Caesar's kingdom.

NARRATOR 2: The two hear a second round of cheers and applause.

CASSIUS: I agree. Why should Caesar be more powerful than you or me? I was born free as Caesar; so were you: We both have fed as well, and we can both endure the winter's cold as well as he. But now he has become larger than life, and we are supposed to bow to him?

BRUTUS: What choice do we have?

NARRATOR 1: For the third time, cheers and applause sound in the distance.

CASSIUS: Caesar must be stopped.

BRUTUS: I'll think about what you've said. Caesar is approaching.

CASSIUS: Stop Casca as he passes by. He'll tell us why they were cheering.

NARRATOR 2: Brutus grabs Casca as he passes.

BRUTUS: What happened over there, Casca?

CASCA: They offered Caesar the crown three times. And three times he turned it down.

BRUTUS: Who offered him the crown?

CASCA: It was Antony. The citizens love Caesar and cheered for him each time he refused the crown. But if you ask me, the whole thing was staged: Caesar said no so he wouldn't look power hungry.

SCENE 4

NARRATOR 1: Meanwhile, Caesar expresses to Antony that he has some fears.

CAESAR: Antony, I do not trust Cassius. He has a lean and hungry look; He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous.

ANTONY: Don't be afraid of him.

He's not dangerous. He's a noble Roman.

NARRATOR 2: Later that night, Cassius meets Casca again.

CASCA: Have you heard? Tomorrow, the senators plan to make Caesar king. I doubt he'll turn it down this time. He'll wear the crown.

CASSIUS: He will become a tyrant. I believe he must be struck down before the power is his. But look who I'm talking to? You're probably ready and willing to obey Caesar the king.

CASCA: I am not. I will kill the man before I bow to him, and I know others who feel the same way.

CASSIUS: We have a deal, then. Gather your friends and let's visit Brutus. We need him on our side. I think he is already leaning toward it.

SCENE 5

NARRATOR 1: It is March 14. Late that night, Brutus walks alone in his garden.

BRUTUS (to himself): Ever since I spoke to Cassius, I haven't slept. The only way Caesar can be stopped is by death. But is it right to kill him? He's my friend, and I have no personal reason to rebel against him. But I must think of the people of Rome. Power will corrupt Caesar, and he will become a tyrant.

NARRATOR 2: There is a knock at his door. It's Cassius and Casca, along with several other conspirators, including Decius.

CASSIUS: I hope this isn't too late to stop by.

BRUTUS: Not at all. I'm awake, tormented by what must be done. Give me your hands, and let's make our pact.

NARRATOR 1: The conspirators stack their hands, one by one.

DECIUS: Is Caesar the only one who must die?

CASSIUS: No. Marc Antony, his right-hand man, cannot outlive Caesar. Let Antony and Caesar fall together.

BRUTUS: If we kill Antony, we will seem too bloodthirsty. We act for the good of all. There's no need to kill Antony.

CASSIUS: I'll go along with that. But I do fear Antony. More important, how will we do this deed? It's doubtful that Caesar will step outside his house on the ides of March after the soothsayer's warning. Caesar has grown suspicious lately.

DECIUS: I know what to do. I'll convince him to go to the capitol.

BRUTUS: All right. We'll meet there at eight and do our terrible work.

SCENE 6

NARRATOR 2: Meanwhile at Caesar's house, his wife, Calpurnia, wakes up after a nightmare.

CALPURNIA: Caesar, they'll murder you! You can't leave the house today. Listen to my dream.

NARRATOR 1: Caesar listens intently but doesn't want to be afraid.

CAESAR: I've never been a coward. I won't start now. Cowards die many times before their death. The valiant never taste of death but once.

CALPURNIA: Tell them it's my fear that keeps you home. I beg you.

CAESAR: All right. I will stay, but only for you.

NARRATOR 2: Decius arrives.

DECIUS: Good morning. I've come to bring you to the capitol.

CAESAR: I'm not going today. My wife had a terrible dream.

CALPURNIA: I dreamt that Caesar's statue was bleeding, and many Romans washed their hands in his blood.

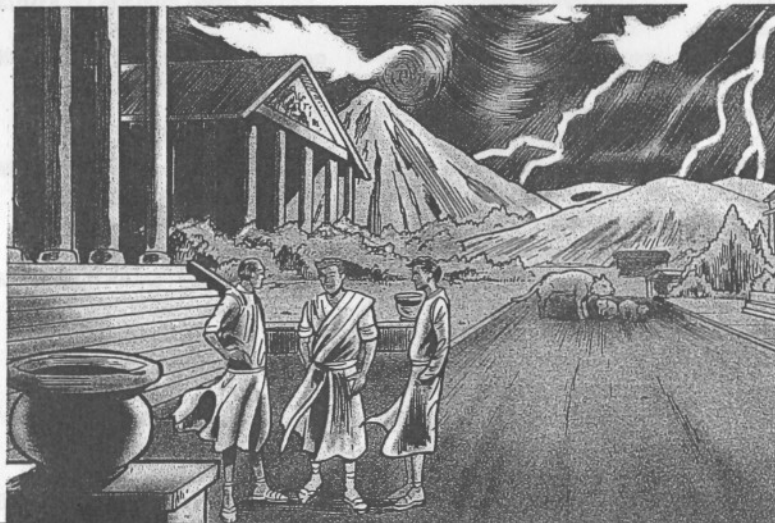
CAESAR: She sees this dream as an omen of evil and has begged me to stay home.

DECIUS: But you've misinterpreted the dream. It's a wonderful vision of Rome receiving new life from you as their leader.

NARRATOR 1: Caesar is flattered by Decius's words.

CAESAR: You may be right.

DECIUS: The senators plan to give you the crown today. If you don't come, they might change their minds. They might say



"WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS ANYWAY?" THE CONSPIRATORS MEET TO TALK ABOUT CAESAR. THEY ENVY HIS POPULARITY AND POWER.

SAY IT! endure — en-DOOR • tyrant — TI-runt • conspirators — kuhn-SPEAR-uh-terz

SAY IT! tormented — tor-MENT-ed • suspicious — suh-SPISH-us • valiant — VAL-yent

that you're afraid.

CAESAR: You make Calpurnia's fears seem foolish. I'm ashamed I agreed with her. I will go!

SCENE 7

NARRATOR 2: Caesar, Antony, all of the conspirators, and the soothsayer walk toward the capitol. When he sees the soothsayer, Caesar tells him his prediction must have been wrong.

CAESAR: The ides of March have come.

SOOTHSAYER: But they are not gone. Beware!

NARRATOR 1: Caesar and the conspirators enter the capitol. The conspirators move closer to Caesar. One of them draws Antony away from Caesar.

NARRATOR 2: Suddenly, the conspirators surround Caesar. Each raises his dagger and plunges it into Caesar's body. Stunned, Caesar looks up and sees his

friend Brutus.

CAESAR: Et tu, Brute? Then fall, Caesar.

NARRATOR 1: "Et tu, Brute" is Latin for "And you, too, Brutus?"

CASSIUS: Liberty! Freedom!

Tyranny is dead! Run and cry it in the streets.

BRUTUS: He was too ambitious and he has paid the price.

CASSIUS: Where is Antony?

BRUTUS: He ran to his house in shock.

SCENE 8

NARRATOR 2: Antony returns to the capitol to speak to Brutus and Cassius.

BRUTUS: Welcome, Antony. I know we seem cruel, but we had Rome's best interest at heart.

ANTONY: I don't doubt your wisdom. If you say Caesar was dangerous, you must be right. I just ask that I be able to speak at his funeral.

BRUTUS: Of course.

CASSIUS: Brutus, can I have a word with you? (*Privately*) Don't let him speak. He'll poison the public against us.

BRUTUS: I will speak first and explain why we did what we did.

NARRATOR 1: Distraught, the people of Rome gather at Caesar's funeral, looking for answers to why their leader was murdered.

BRUTUS: Romans, you must listen and let me explain our cause, for our cause was just. We killed Caesar for you, for Rome. His ambition would have gotten the better of him, and we saved you from that. Understand: Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more.

NARRATOR 2: The people are satisfied by what Brutus says. Next, Antony speaks.

ANTONY: Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears. I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him . . . He was my friend, faithful

and just to me. But Brutus says he was ambitious, and Brutus is an honorable man. . . . When the poor have cried, Caesar has wept. Ambition requires more strength than that. Yet Brutus says he was ambitious, and Brutus is an honorable man.

You all did see that . . . I thrice presented him a kingly crown, which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition? Yet Brutus says he was ambitious, and sure he is an honorable man. Bear with me. My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar, and I must pause till it come back to me.

CITIZEN 1: He's right. Caesar would not take the crown. So he certainly wasn't ambitious.

CITIZEN 2: Caesar has been wronged. Look at Antony. His eyes are red as fire with weeping.

ANTONY: I found Caesar's will in his closet. But I won't read it to you. It would anger you too much. And I can't do that to the noble Brutus.

CITIZEN 1: Brutus was a traitor, not a noble man! Read the will!

CITIZEN 2: They were villains! Murderers! Read the will!

ANTONY (reading): He leaves his money to the Roman citizens! He also left you all of his parks and gardens to use.

CITIZEN 1: This was a great man! We must avenge Caesar's death!

CITIZEN 2: Let's burn down the conspirators' houses!

NARRATOR 1: The citizens leave in an angry, uncontrollable mob.

SCENE 9

NARRATOR 2: Cassius and Brutus flee Rome. They plot to gain control of the Roman Empire, but the public is on Antony's side.

NARRATOR 1: Antony meets with Octavius, Caesar's son. Together, they plan to defeat Brutus and Cassius and maintain control.

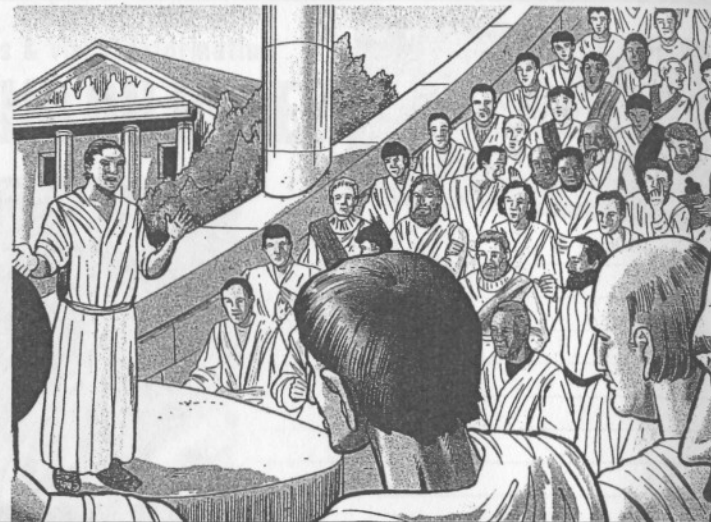
NARRATOR 2: Brutus and Cassius gather their troops. In his war tent, Brutus sees Caesar's ghost.

BRUTUS: My eyes must be weak.

What am I seeing?

CAESAR'S GHOST: It is I, Brutus.

BRUTUS: Why have you come?



"FRIENDS, ROMANS, COUNTRYMEN, LEND ME YOUR EARS." MARC ANTONY IS PRETTY SLICK. CAN YOU TELL FROM HIS SPEECH WHETHER HE THINKS THE CONSPIRATORS DID THE RIGHT THING?

CAESAR'S GHOST: To tell you that you'll see me again in battle.
NARRATOR 1: The ghost disappears.

SCENE 10

NARRATOR 2: Brutus and Cassius meet one last time before parting to lead different troops.
CASSIUS: We're sure to win. But what if we don't? Are you prepared to be a prisoner of Rome?

BRUTUS: Never. If we lose this battle, this is the last time you'll ever see me. Farewell.

CASSIUS: I couldn't live as a prisoner, either. Farewell, Brutus.

NARRATOR 1: Cassius's troops are quickly overwhelmed by Antony and Octavius's forces. Sure of defeat, Cassius turns to one of his soldiers and asks to be killed.

CASSIUS: Take my sword, the same sword that ran through Caesar, and pierce my heart. Caesar, your death is avenged with the sword that killed you.

NARRATOR 2: The soldier stabs Cassius, and he dies instantly.

NARRATOR 1: Meanwhile, Brutus's troops are also overtaken. It is the final sign of his doom.

BRUTUS (to a soldier): We are finished! Take my sword and I'll run into it. Caesar can rest in peace now.

NARRATOR 2: After the battle, Octavius and Antony find Brutus's body. But instead of seeing a fallen enemy, they see a decent man.

ANTONY: Brutus became my enemy but he was a noble man. All of the conspirators—except Brutus—envied Caesar. Brutus did what he thought was for common good.

OCTAVIUS: We will give him the burial of an honored soldier. Let us call our armies from the field, and leave here to enjoy our victory. ■



"ET TU, BRUTE?" CAESAR HAD A CLUE THAT SOMETHING BAD MIGHT HAPPEN, BUT HIS PAL BRUTUS WITH A KNIFE? THAT WAS A SHOCK!

SAY IT! ambitious — am-BISH-uhss • distraught — dih-STROT

SAY IT! traitor — TRA-ter • avenge — uh-VENJ